

LOU BARLETTA

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**TRANSPORTATION AND
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The Honorable Betsy DeVos
Secretary
U.S. Department of Education
400 Maryland Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20202

Dear Secretary DeVos:

I would like to commend you for the steps you are taking as Chairwoman of the Federal Commission on School Safety to tackle one of the most pressing issues facing our nation today. I applaud President Donald J. Trump for creating this commission, which will provide recommendations to protect our students, teachers, and administrators. To that end, I would like to bring to your attention legislation that I introduced, H.R. 5990, the Protecting Our Kids Act, which will help enhance security measures at our nation's schools.

Every year, the Federal government takes numerous measures to protect its buildings and employees from outside threats. Meanwhile, our children continue to sit in classrooms completely vulnerable to shootings and other forms of violence.

As the father of four daughters, two of whom are teachers, and a grandfather of eight, I believe that our children are America's greatest asset and their safety is of the utmost importance. Securing our schools and prioritizing safety should not be a difficult decision for Washington. Our children deserve to grow up in a safe learning environment, free of fear and violence.

That's why I introduced H.R. 5990, which directs the Department of Education, in coordination with the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), to issue security guidance for schools within 60 days of enactment. This guidance will be based on similar security standards DHS already provides for federal facilities.

This legislation would not mandate any blanket security protocols, but rather provide an additional tool for schools to use to determine what improvements can be made that best fit the unique needs of their students, faculty, and campus.

Currently, DHS prepares and disseminates similar standards to federal agencies and buildings to ensure that properties and the federal employees that work there have sufficient protections to keep them safe. We should provide the same service to our educational institutions.

As the Federal Commission on School Safety continues its vital work to protect our students, I request that you consider the importance of preparing and disseminating security guidance that can be tailored to individual schools to provide our nation's children with a safe place to learn. It is time we give our schools the same security resources as federal buildings.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Lou Barletta". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Lou" and last name "Barletta" clearly distinguishable.

Lou Barletta
Member of Congress

CC:

The Honorable Jeff Sessions
The Honorable Kirstjen Nielsen
The Honorable Alex Azar